UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1818
26 January 1995

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations must promote democracy within and among States, and in emerging global society, Secretary-General tells World Economic Forum; democracy can and should be assimilated by all cultures.

+ Security Council and General Assembly concurrently elect Vladlen Stepanovich Vereshchetin of Russian Federation to International Court of Justice.

+ James Grant resigns as UNICEF Executive Director for health reasons; Secretary-General expresses gratitude for 15 years of service to world's children.

+ Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia welcome reopening of Croatia pipeline as important achievement in search for negotiated solutions.

+ UNPROFOR lodges protest after Bosnian Serb forces shell Bihac safe area for first time in ten days.

+ New York State Bar Association presents United Nations with annual award for distinction in international law and affairs.

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The global mission of democratization can only be accomplished by acting at all the levels at which power is wielded in international society, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, today, he said the United Nations must act to promote democracy not only within States and among States, but also within the emerging global society.

For some years, the United Nations had been waging a diplomatic effort on behalf of democracy within States, he noted. That diplomacy was most immediately apparent in peace-keeping operations, which envisaged both the restoration of democracy and the protection of human rights. A new generation of peace-keeping forces was now at work, and one of its foundations was the

imperative of democracy. The Organization must be able to assist States to adapt institutions, educate citizens, train leaders and draft legislation that respected human rights. It must help to create independent judicial systems, establish armed forces respectful of the rule of law, train police forces to safeguard public freedoms and set up human rights education systems.

In promoting democratization, he continued, the United Nations was not trying to persuade States to imitate others, or to borrow extraneous political forms, or to democratize simply to please certain Western States. "No one has a monopoly on democracy," he stressed. "Democracy can and should be assimilated by all cultures." It might take many forms, depending on the characteristics and circumstances of peoples. Democracy was not a model to be copied from certain States, but a goal to be attained by all peoples.

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The Security Council and the General Assembly, meeting concurrently, today elected Vladlen Stepanovich Vereshchetin (Russian Federation) to the International Court of Justice, for a term expiring on 5 February 1997. He will fill the seat left vacant by the death of Judge Nikolai Kostantinovitch Tarassov (Russian Federation) on 28 September 1994.

Elections to the Court require an absolute majority of votes in both the Council and the Assembly. Mr. Vereshchetin, the only candidate for the seat, was elected unanimously by the Council, and obtained 128 votes in the Assembly.

Mr. Vereshchetin has been a Deputy Director and Head of the International Law Department of the Institute of State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, since 1981; Chairman of the United Nations International Law Commission since 1994; and member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague since 1984. He was nominated by the national groups of Austria, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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James Grant has submitted his resignation as Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for health reasons, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. In accepting the resignation, the Secretary-General expressed his gratitude for Mr. Grant's 15 years of service to the Fund and the world's children, describing him as the epitome of the international civil servant.

Deputy Executive Director Richard Jolly will serve as acting Executive Director of UNICEF, pending the appointment of a successor to Mr. Grant, the spokesman noted.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, today welcomed the reopening of the oil

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pipeline which crosses Croatia. They described it as another important step in the implementation of the Economic Agreement signed by the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serbs on 2 December, and in the search for further negotiated solutions.

Meanwhile, work has been continuing on electricity and water projects, and the reopening of rail links in Croatia. Some 1,500 vehicles yesterday used the Zagreb-Belgrade international highway, which was reopened following the 2 December Agreement.

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Bosnian Serb forces this morning fired six shells into the Bihac safe area, injuring one civilian, according to a United Nations spokesman. It was the first time the town had been shelled in ten days. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) lodged a protest after the incident.

The Bosnian Serbs also fired seven shells into an area north of Bihac where Bangladeshi peace-keepers are stationed, the spokesman said. Meanwhile, fighting continued around the town of Velika Kladusa.

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The International Law and Practice Section of the New York State Bar Association has presented its annual award for distinction in international law and affairs to the United Nations. The award is normally presented to a distinguished personality. However, the Section decided to present the award to the United Nations on its fiftieth anniversary "in recognition and commendation of its forceful and unceasing pursuit of world peace and development over a period of half a century".

The award was received on behalf of the United Nations and on behalf of the Secretary-General by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Legal Counsel Hans Corell.

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